Israel and its Army

From cohesion to confusion

Stuart A. Cohen

Middle Eastern Military Studies

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The Israel Defense Force (IDF) plays a key role in Israeli society and has traditionally been regarded not only as the guardian of national survival, but also as a 'people's army' responsible for the custody of national values. This volume analyzes the circumstances currently undermining those perceptions and explores both the changes occurring in Israel's military framework and their potential implications.

This book highlights the influence exerted on relations between Israelis and their army by massive shifts in the country's domestic and cultural environments as well as transformations in the external strategic landscape. It argues that these changes, besides compelling the IDF to undertake major programmes of structural reform and doctrinal revision, have also stimulated unprecedented critical public scrutiny of the armed forces and their conduct. The way in which the resultant tensions are resolved is of crucial importance not only for Israel, but for the Middle East as a whole.

This book will be of considerable interest to students of Politics and International Relations, Middle East Studies and Military Studies.

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To Tova and our family
Psalms 128: 5–6

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Foreword

Although this book was originally commissioned by *Routledge* in the autumn of 2005, I only began writing the manuscript on July 12, 2006. By a quirk of fate, that same morning a Hizbollah team ambushed an Israel Defense Force (IDF) patrol just inside Israel's Lebanese border, thereby triggering what Israel officially terms her 'second Lebanon War'.

From Israel's perspective, the campaign that followed fell far short of expectations. The IDF did not attain the swift, overwhelming and virtually bloodless battlefield victory initially anticipated by Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, the state-of-the-art air force pilot who had swaggered into office as chief of the IDF General Staff just a year earlier, in June 2005. Rather, the fighting, which dragged on for 34 days, was disappointingly protracted and costly. Despite being outgunned and outnumbered, Hizbollah forces managed to disable 45 of Israel's much-vaunted 'Merkavah' Mk 4 tanks (10 percent of the IDF armor deployed in the war), to temporarily put out of service the pride of Israel's navy, the class-5 Saar destroyer INS *Hanit* ('Spear') and – most embarrassing of all – to subject the Galilee to a daily bombardment of short-range 'katyusha' missiles. By the time the UN managed to cobble together a cease-fire, 119 Israeli troops and 39 civilians had been killed, and hundreds more seriously injured. Not even the subsequent award of decorations to 142 servicemen for acts of individual heroism could mitigate the impression that the IDF was not up to scratch.

Just as significant as the operational features of the second Lebanon War were the reactions of Israeli society to its unexpected course. Complaints of military bungling and mismanagement began to appear in the media as early as the second week of the fighting. By the time the war reached its bloody close, the trickle of suspicion had expanded into a torrent of allegations, with discharged IDF reservists leading the pack and baying cries of betrayal. Opinion polls reported that Israeli society's confidence in its armed forces, which for over five decades had consistently hovered at around 90 percent, had in August 2006 plummeted to unprecedented lows. Prime Minister Olmert sought to shore up the dykes of public confidence by commissioning, Eliyahu Winograd, a retired justice of the Supreme Court, to chair an investigation of the war's conduct. The Chief

of Staff likewise bowed to public pressure and, in the course of the autumn and winter of 2006, established some 40 internal military tribunals whose inquiries, he promised, would leave no stone unturned.

In at least one important respect, these moves boomeranged. Designed to clear the air, the plethora of commissions of inquiry served only to intensify tensions. Even in the censored versions, their reports produced ample fresh evidence of military and political dereliction. Moreover, the Winograd Committee's transcripts make it clear that several of the witnesses summoned to testify had calculated that their best course was to beat someone else's breast, a strategy that inevitably further poisoned relationships amongst and between the politicians and their generals. Amir Peretz, the inexperienced Minister of Defense who the war consigned to the lonely margins of public life, suffered the indignity of being voted out of office by his own party.

In the IDF, the knives went to work still more extensively. After dismissing a number of his senior subordinates, including one of the two area commanders in the Lebanon, and publicly exchanging insults with several major generals, two of whom resigned in a huff, Halutz himself walked the plank in February 2007. His replacement as CoS was General Gabi Ashkenazi, a product of the old down-to-earth IDF infantry school, who had had the good fortune to retire from service prior to the outbreak of the war, and was hence untainted by its failures. Deliberately projecting a back-to-basics approach, Ashkenazi immediately launched a program of intensive military reform. Older IDF units, some of which had not trained together for years, were given a schedule of rigorous exercises; new formations were created in order to repair deficiencies in the order of battle. But although these measures reportedly helped to restore some of the IDF's confidence in itself and, by extension, some public confidence in the IDF, the fallout from the war persisted. In June 2007, another of the area commanders responsible for the campaign announced 'mea culpa' and resigned; the following month, so too did the commander of Israel's navy.

Necessarily, elements of these interconnected dramas are woven into the present study's analysis of relationships between the IDF and the society that it is committed to defend. Nevertheless, it is important to stress at the outset that this book is not presented as a narrative of either the second Lebanon War or its domestic aftermath. Rather, it seeks to expand the focus of thematic and chronological enquiry and thereby illuminate the contexts necessary for an understanding of the societal–military atmosphere preceding the conflict and, by extension, for a balanced assessment of the roots of the public outcry to which it gave rise. Hence, this book is principally concerned with a long-term process of adjustment in relations between Israelis and their army that is still very much under way. Specifically, it identifies the multiple pressures – not just military desiderata but also, and often more substantially, an array of changing cultural, economic, technological, political and demographic trends – that have influ-

enced the various and varied forms in which soldiers, citizens and soldier-citizens have always interacted in Israel and continue to do so. At the same time, it traces the trajectory of that relationship, demonstrating how the cohesiveness that was once considered its most striking characteristic has, in successive stages, given way to a sense of confusion and uncertainty about its future direction.

A note on sources

As is inevitable in studies of this type, at several points, it treads along paths mapped out by others. Hence, most of the references in the pages that follow are to secondary sources. But I would hardly have dared put finger to keyboard without at least some access to primary and authentic information originating in the IDF itself.

It is indicative of the transformations currently taking place in the attitudes of the armed forces in Israel to the Israeli public, transformations that lie at the very heart of this book, that such materials are not now as difficult to obtain as was the case in earlier periods, when access to primary sources on military-related matters was severely restricted to a few privileged insiders, and even then only in very stingy doses. Although the IDF still shrouds numerous matters in strict secrecy, on several topics it today makes publicly available far more information than could once have been imagined. True, for the most part, it does so grudgingly, and only in reluctant response to demands, expressed by the courts as well as the media, that the military evince 'transparency'. But some breaches in the walls of silence have occurred voluntarily and indeed have occasionally been instigated by individual sectors within the IDF itself. The lead in this respect has been taken by the IDF's Behavioral Science Unit (*Makhleket Mada'ei ha-Hitnahagut*, known from its Hebrew acronym as *MAMDAH*), whose staff of sociologists and psychologists has deliberately broken with a tradition in accordance with which IDF authorities, very much like their senior colleagues elsewhere in the world, kept academics interested in their institution at arm's length. Today, members of *MAMDAH* maintain several channels of formal and informal communication with colleagues in academia, which in turn facilitate access to other IDF branches and their senior personnel. What has emerged, then, is a particular version of what sociologists call an 'epistemic community', in which ties of association cut across formal lines of affiliation.

I count it as a privilege to have for several years been occasionally invited to participate in such exchanges. They have not provided me with any hard data that I could possibly publish without betraying the confidence of persons who have honored me with their trust. Rather their contribution, one in several respects even more informative, has been to provide less formalized insights into the sort of issues with which the IDF is concerned and the directions in which its search for solutions is moving.

In a sense, then, my contacts with the IDF have provided signposts, pointing out the areas in which I might profitably search for complementary materials, available in the public domain.

My efforts to do so have been very much facilitated by two other institutions. One is the Department of Political Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, which has been my academic home for many years. The other is the University's Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies, of which I am proud to have been a research associate since its foundation by Dr Thomas Hecht. Under the energetic leadership of my good friend and colleague, Professor Efraim Inbar, BESA, has for over a decade now provided a uniquely collegial environment for the analysis of Israeli security in all its facets. For that supportive ambience, I am truly grateful.

Without in any way avoiding responsibility for my work, I would also like to acknowledge the insights provided over the years by students in my annual MA seminars on the IDF at Bar-Ilan and especially by those who have intermittently worked as research assistants: Mr (now Dr) Ilan Suliman, Ms. Ronit Zaga, Mr Kobie Green, Mr Ori Bagno and Mr (now Dr) Ehud Eilam. Especially appreciated during the last tricky stages of writing was the advice as well as help provided by Mr Avi Woolf.

I would also like to acknowledge with thanks the confidence shown by Professor Barry Rubin, who invited me to contribute to the *Routledge* 'Middle Eastern Military Studies' series of which this book is a part and who has been supportive throughout.

As always, however, my greatest debt – and one impossible to specify – is to my wife and our family.

Stuart A. Cohen

1 Frameworks of analysis

Ever since its foundation as an independent state in 1948, Israel has habitually been depicted as 'a nation in arms'. Of the several circumstances assumed to justify that description undoubtedly the most conspicuous is the pervasiveness of military conflict in the national narrative. Born into battle, Israel has ever since been almost continuously engaged in some form of violent military confrontation. War, indeed, has been central, as much to the formation of the collective identity of most Israelis as to their state's consolidation.

So, too, was the experience of soldiering. From the first, Israel enacted a system of military service whereby all citizens, females as well as males, enlisted in the Israel Defense Force (IDF) when aged 18 and could be drafted for annual stints of compulsory reserve duty until middle age. Nominally, that legislation still applies. As a result, salaried professionals never comprised more than a fraction of the overall complement of the country's armed forces. Most soldiers in *TZAHAL*, the Hebrew acronym for the IDF, have always been citizens temporarily in uniform.

Even individually, those circumstances would invalidate many of the boundaries that elsewhere in the world conventionally demarcate 'military' from 'civilian' segments of public life. Combined, they have created a symbiosis between Israeli society and its army without parallel in post-World War II democracies. At the apex of the Israeli social structure, civilian and military elites over the years forged a close partnership, whose influence enabled numerous senior officers to somersault their way into politics or to attain high executive positions in public service virtually the minute they retired from active army life. Still more extensively, a military ethos long pervaded other strata in the societal fabric. Quite apart from being invested with iconic status as the guardian of national survival, the IDF was widely projected as the corporate custodian of national values. The message that military service is as much a national privilege as a legal obligation was drummed into successive generations of schoolchildren almost without change – and apparently to enormous effect. Propensity to enlist in the ranks and to volunteer for combat units, colloquially known as 'motivation to service', has always been extraordinarily high.

Thanks to such phenomena, relations between Israelis and their army habitually defy conventional categorization, refusing to be dragooned into the terminological pigeonholes common in the political science literature. Dan Horowitz, one of the pioneers of the scientific study of Israel's civil–military complex, long ago pointed out why that is so (Horowitz 1977). For one thing, although the IDF is undoubtedly subordinate to the democratically elected government, its exceptionally large influence over policy-making clearly deviates from Samuel Huntington's model of 'objective' civilian control. But on the other hand, Horowitz argued, it would be equally untrue to depict Israel as a 'garrison state', dominated by persons whom the American sociologist Howard Lasswell identified as specialists in the organization of violence and its application. Instead, Israel and her army form a singular compound. Precisely because the boundaries differentiating her soldiers from her citizens are so porous, they facilitate the existence of what Horowitz subsequently termed 'a civilianized military in a partially militarized society' (Horowitz 1982: 77–105).

There was always more to the pas de deux relationship thus outlined than a merely mechanistic ordering of instrumental interactions between Israelis and their army. Over time, their fusion was facilitated, and cemented, by an association that possessed unabashedly devotional overtones. From the first, the IDF prided itself on being 'a people's army' – not a severely compartmentalized instrument of state policy, responsible solely for narrowly defined security concerns, but an institution that is representative of all the various (principally Jewish) groupings of which Israel's heterogeneous population is composed and a forum in which they might find a sense of common purpose (Williams 1989). And, as will be demonstrated below, for several decades, society responded by displaying adulation for the IDF and expressing attachment to the values that it ostensibly embodies.

Scholarly surveys, too, conveyed the message of deep and reciprocal emotional attachment. Occasional instances of civil–military contention, whether at the base of society (as shown by ultra-orthodox Jewish protests against the conscription of women in the 1950s) or at the highest decision-making levels (as in the tense days prior to the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967), were treated as aberrations. Potential areas of future friction, even though not entirely dismissed, were likewise judged to be peripheral. At the broad center of Israeli life, attitudes toward the IDF's role in society seemed to be infused with an aura of fundamental consensus and marked by overwhelming agreement with regard to both the necessity for the military apparatus and its right to priority in the allocation of the country's resources, human as well as material. Hence, Israel found no place at all in cross-country analyses of the circumstances that might facilitate a breakdown in the democratic chain of command. Indeed, in the introduction that Samuel Finer wrote to the Hebrew translation of

his classic *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Finer 1982: 21–29), a work originally published 20 years earlier, he had no difficulty at all in explaining away the fact that Israel did not even appear in its index.

What made this atmosphere of persistent civil–military harmony especially conspicuous is the contrast with the divisiveness evident in other spheres of Israeli public concern (Horowitz and Lissak 1989). After 1948, and in some cases before, national policies with regard to education, social welfare, international alignment, immigration and religious affairs generated contentious debates, which were invariably conducted in a spirit of heated ideological dissension. By contrast, the IDF appeared immune to public strife. Even when its activities were not protected by strict censorship, as was usually the case, they were likely to be shielded from critical popular scrutiny by the equally protective cocoon of domestic esteem. In films, novels, theaters and songs, the IDF was portrayed as the universally acknowledged guardian and repository of Israel's national virtue. Add to this its record of battlefield success, and it is easy to understand how for many years the IDF came to enjoy a public status that often approached the sacral.

By the first decade of the twenty-first century, those conditions no longer applied. Instead, the IDF found itself being steadily demythologized. Men in uniform, once approached as demigods, came to be considered mere mortals. Likewise, the military institution, previously an object of deferential awe, is now often the butt of critical disesteem. Whilst the antecedents of that development lie deep in fundamental shifts in Israeli culture (which will be analyzed below, Chapter 4), its initial stirrings surfaced during two of the great caesurae of Israeli military history. One was the 1973 Yom Kippur war, when the IDF swayed precariously on the pedestal of infallibility that it had mounted in triumph just six years earlier. The other was the Lebanon campaign of 1982, the first war in Israeli history to give rise to domestic dissension of any significance.

Although opinion polls indicate that even thereafter the IDF remained the most respected of all Israeli public institutions (which, considering the paucity of the opposition, does not necessarily say very much), by the early 1990s its ratings were tending to fluctuate with unprecedented frequency (Arian 1995: 62–65). True, disillusionment was uneven, affecting some sectors of Israeli society more noticeably than others. But, even before the fiasco of the 2006 second Lebanon War, the overall trend was unmistakable. A relationship that just a quarter of a century earlier had been characterized by the mutual celebration of such copybook achievements as the IDF's rescue of Jewish hostages at Entebbe in 1976 and its 'surgical' destruction of the Iraqi nuclear installation at Osiraq in 1981 was showing signs of mutual disillusionment. Senior officers had become outspokenly critical of trends in Israeli society; articulate segments of society increasingly distanced themselves from the armed forces.

It would undoubtedly be mistaken to exaggerate the singularity of that swing in public mood. After all, similar changes in relationships between societies and their armed forces simultaneously took place throughout western society, of which most Israelis like to consider themselves a part. In Europe, as well as in northern America, massive cultural shifts in public attitudes toward the morality and efficacy of the use of military force, trends initially evident during the Vietnam War and thereafter accelerated by the end of the Cold War and the quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan, have for decades been engendering an atmosphere that, notwithstanding the persistence of local idiosyncrasies (Forster 2005: 100–136), is broadly permeated by 'post-militarism'. This climate has not altogether tarnished the symbolic esteem in which men (and, increasingly, women) in uniform are held. But the new environment does undermine many of the time-honored values and virtues to which generations of armies traditionally appealed when framing their calls to military service. The so-called 'post-modern militaries' have largely jettisoned the old rhetoric of patriotism. Instead, they base their recruitment and retention policies on inducements of a more blatantly material nature (Moskos *et al.* 1999: 1–13; Morgan 2003).

Whilst noting such parallels and their influences on the IDF, the principal thrust of this book will nevertheless be introspective. It is not conceived as an exercise in comparative international analysis, but as a study of a process whose Israeli version possesses features of its own. This emphasis on the intra-national level of analysis is deliberate. It reflects the argument that – notwithstanding the apparent universality of 'post-modern militaries' – their emergence is not entirely amenable to generic study. To say that is not of course to disparage the contribution of those scholars who have conducted synoptic inquiries into the phenomenon, undoubtedly the most influential of whom has been the American military sociologist, Professor Charles Moskos. It is, however, to emphasize the need to incorporate a complementary, second-tier analysis, one that focuses specifically on the mechanics of the process whereby what is trans-national in the new climate of relations between societies and their armies is being shaped by what is singular and parochial in the specific circumstances of individual nations. Such is the approach underlying the present work. By concentrating on the grainy particularity of changing relationships between Israelis and their army, it hopes to illuminate their wider influence on Israel's security policies and preferences.

To the best of my knowledge, no work of a similar type and scope has previously been published. It must immediately be pointed out, however, that no work of this type could possibly have been contemplated, let alone completed, had other students of the field not undertaken much of the preliminary groundwork. They did, of course, leave considerable room for further interpretation and analysis – which is what this book purports to provide. Nevertheless, in many respects this is a work of synthesis, which

is heavily indebted to an extended chain of earlier studies (including, I must add, some of my own). The purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to clarify that context. It does not purport to present a comprehensive survey of the study of relationships between military and society in Israel. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate the extent to which the ebb and flow of that interaction is itself reflected in its historiography, a phenomenon that helps to explain why – and when – some aspects of this field have attracted more attention than others.

Scholarly traditions

The study of relations between Israelis and their army is a comparative latecomer, whose pedigree is much shorter than the topic it purports to analyze. During the first 25 years of Israel's existence, the country's civil–military nexus attracted almost no attention in either academic or professional military circles and was likewise absent from more popular discourse. There certainly was an interest in Israeli security studies, broadly defined. But the field was dominated by narrative military histories that were largely written by participants in the events they described, who drew heavily on memory, pride and prejudice.

The early historiography of the War of Independence set the tone, with the initial spate of memoirs and unit commemorations displaying a heavy bias toward operational detail that was only occasionally relieved by flashes of strategic analysis (Bar-On 2001). Much the same was true of the IDF's official *Korot Milkhemet Ha-Atzma'ut* ('Narrative of the War of Independence'), put together by Netanel Lorch, the founder and first CO of the IDF's Historical Branch, and published in 1958. In 550 pages, this massive inventory of engagements minor as well as major clearly set out to celebrate received national orthodoxies, and hence for the most part avoided critical introspection. In 1966, the triumphant mold was fractured by the appearance of a study entitled *Bitachon Yisrael – Etmol, ha-Yom u-Machar* ('Israel's Security: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'). But that occasionally brilliant book was contaminated, certainly in the public eye, by the identity of its author, Yisrael Ber, a long-time Ben-Gurion *confidant* who in 1961 had been found guilty of spying on behalf of the Soviet Union. Besides, within a year of publication, Ber's analysis was overtaken by the Six-Day War, whose afterglow generated demand for another crop of unabashedly adulatory reconstructions of battlefield heroism, many written by hired hands chosen more for their ability to recount tales of martial glory than for their qualities as historians.

Emphases did change in the wake of the Yom Kippur War of 1973, altogether a pivotal juncture in the IDF's declinology. Awareness of military incompetence prior to that campaign, especially as uncovered by the judicial tribunal set up in its wake (the Agranat Commission), created a climate that allowed for the appearance of a more analytical type of study.

The first to take advantage of this new tone were Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz (1975), two young scholars whose *The Israeli Army, 1948–1973* hacked a pioneering way through a forest of myths and assumptions that had never previously been explored. With the opening of some – albeit, it must be stressed, by no means all – of Israel's institutional and national archives to public inspection in the 1980s, Israeli military history also became an accepted topic of academic treatment. Some researchers exploited this situation in order to fight old battles all over again. But others sought to reach a less obviously partisan understanding of the processes whereby the results were obtained. Eventually, many of the fruits of their labors reached a wider audience with the publication of an entire library of densely footnoted monographs, essays and collective books on Israel's military past (Bar-On 2004: 1–20).

Novel approaches to the subject also emerged. A school of self-styled 'new' historians deliberately set out to rewrite and revise the accepted (Jewish) heroic narrative that had thereto controlled the interpretational landscape, especially with respect to the events of 1948 (Gelber 2004: 43–68). Others scholars, although less blatant in their attachment to a specific program, produced works that were hardly less iconoclastic. Especially, noteworthy in this latter category is Martin van Creveld's *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israel Defense Force* (1998), which offers as much an informed indictment of Israel's security policies in the present as a scholarly commentary on her military achievements in the past. Yet a third move away from the old school of historical study was taken by historians who deliberately avoided focusing on clashes of arms. Looking beyond the battlefield, they teased out of the sources a mine of information about the evolution of IDF force structures and doctrines. The most intrepid even managed to decode some of the black arts of Israel's military budgeting (Greenberg 1988, 1993).

Notwithstanding this surge of activity, the record of relationships between the IDF and the society from which it drew its resources suffered comparative neglect. Luttwak and Horowitz (1975: 280–286) devoted just six pages to this topic, which is similarly marginalized in Van Creveld's (1998: 362) comment that 'A military that used to regard itself – and was regarded by others – as the vanguard of the nation in many ways has turned into a social anachronism.' Virtually, the only historical issue of specifically sociological interest studied in any depth was the contribution that the IDF made to the development of Jewish–Israeli society, and hence to the military role in immigrant absorption, land settlement and the like during the early years of statehood (Bowden 1976, since superseded by Drori 2005a). But the obverse side of that coin – the impact that society may have exerted on the military – long remained a void. Indeed, throughout the first half-century of Israel's existence, little more than perfunctory attention was paid to what Sir Michael Howard famously labeled 'the forgotten dimensions of strategy' (Howard 1979): the influence that domestic

factors might have exerted on the IDF's combat performance and operational style.

Once the gaze is shifted from the discipline of history to the social sciences, treatment of such issues undoubtedly becomes more spacious. Here too, however, the record has a Cinderella-like quality. Prior to the 1960s, not a single work of any substance was published in the fields of politics and sociology on relations between Israeli society and the IDF, references to which were limited to occasional observations, usually by foreign observers. Thereafter, too, the growth in attention was uneven and proceeded in three broad chronological spurts: the first lasted from the late 1960s through the 1970s; the second began in the early 1980s and went on until the mid-1990s, when it was succeeded by the third, which is still in progress. These time frames were never entirely segmented. Some overlapping did take place, with topics dominant in one period continuing to be analyzed during others. Overall, however, each wave of study possessed its own character and focus. Hence, they will here be outlined sequentially.

The first wave, whose genesis dates to the late 1960s, focused almost exclusively on the style and substance of what was broadly defined as national security decision-making. Hence, the question considered most worthy of attention was how Israel's political and military elites collaborate when formulating and implementing national defense strategies, preserving civilian surveillance whilst at the same time permitting the armed forces professional autonomy. First posed by Amos Perlmutter as early as 1968, when Israel's policy makers seemed to have discovered the secret of apparently perfect co-ordination (Perlmutter 1968, 1969), that still remains a central issue of inquiry. Indeed, now that interactions between Israel's political and military elites no longer project an appearance of such perfect harmony, their relationships are reviewed even more intensely, and very much more critically (Yaniv 1994; Ben-Meir 1995; Ya'ari 2004; Maoz 2006; Peri 2006). But although the context of the material has thus changed, the methodological framework in which it is analyzed basically remains unaltered. Specifically, in this area the interpretational landscape is still dominated by theories and hypotheses originally posited, without any reference whatsoever to Israel, in Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (first published in 1957). Specific references to newer paradigms, such as the principal–agent models developed by Deborah Avant (1998), Michael Desch (1999) and Peter Feaver (2003), are only just beginning to make an appearance in the literature on the Israeli 'case' (Michael 2007).

Early in the 1980s, the pendulum of research began to swing, and the study of civil–military relations in Israel embarked upon its *second wave* of development. In this stage, concentration on the specifics of the IDF's impact on decisions for war and peace was complemented by a wider spectrum of inquiries into the ways, some obtrusive others subtle, in which

civil–military relationships intrude upon additional areas of Israeli life, private as well as public.

Here, too, the principal tools of analysis were imported from abroad, and again especially from the United States. Particularly obtrusive was the influence exerted by the 'Armed Forces and Society' approach pioneered by Morris Janowitz and subsequently further advanced by Charles Moskos, with both of whom several Israeli scholars became personally acquainted. An outstanding and formative example is Professor Moshe Lissak of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, whose status as a founding father of Israeli military sociology received formal recognition in 1993, when he was awarded the Israel Prize for his work in this field. Taken under Janowitz's wing when a post-doctoral student at the University of Chicago in the 1960s, Lissak immediately set about looking for ways to explain how, notwithstanding the IDF's high profile, Israel nevertheless managed to remain a vibrant democracy. In an extended series of papers and books, published in both Hebrew and English, Lissak insisted that the key to this 'paradox', as he termed it, could not be found solely by examining the nature of civil–military relations at the very apex of government. Analysis had also to include interactions at lower reaches in the societal pyramid (Lissak 1983, 1993: 55–80).

Accuracy requires that the influence of Lissak's writings not be antedated. In fact, their impact on the Israeli academic community was delayed. In their statistical survey of 'The Study of War and the Military in Israel', Zeev Rosenhek *et al.* (2003) demonstrate that for many years Lissak's remained a rather lonely voice. With the important (but nevertheless singular) exception of Dan Horowitz, a colleague at the Hebrew University with whom Lissak coauthored several seminal works, no other academic immediately responded to his exhortation to apply American sociological methodologies to the Israeli case. Altogether, indeed, interest in the IDF and its relations with Israeli society at large remained low, with the result that, according to this audit (Rosenhek *et al.* 2003: 463), between 1967 and 1983 the *sum total* of academic publications in the general field of military sociology in Israel was just 31, of which 13 were authored by non-Israelis and only five did not focus on national security decision-making.

Hence, what is here termed the second wave of studies on civil–military relations in Israel did not really gather steam until the first third of the 1980s. Thereafter, however, the tempo changed radically. Statistics tell one part of the story. Between 1983 and 1997, the year in which the survey conducted by Rosenhek *et al.* ends, fully 136 new publications in this field appeared, at an average of around nine each year (compared to two and a half in the period prior to 1983). Equally noteworthy is the fact that although 90 percent of the post-1983 publications were authored or coauthored by Israeli scholars (compared to a much lower figure in the previous period), less than a quarter originally appeared in Hebrew, and fully

76 percent first saw the light of day in English-language journals or books published abroad. This indication of a growing international interest in the specifics of relations between Israel and her army is confirmed by my own survey of the contents of *Armed Forces and Society*, a quarterly that is generally recognized to be the premiere journal in the field. In all its first ten volumes, covering the decade 1974–1984, *Armed Forces and Society* published only one article of any direct relevance to the IDF (Azarya and Kimmerling 1980). By contrast, of the 583 articles published between the fall of 1984 and the summer of 2007, the number of those specifically dedicated to Israeli-related matters rose to 34 – almost 6 percent of the total – only two of which were not authored by Israelis.

Even more dramatic has been the increasing diversity of the topics covered since the 1980s. Several studies still follow paths originally mapped out by Lissak and his disciples. Thus, even when employing such new buzzwords as 'policy networks' and 'social networks', they essentially flesh out his portrait of the formal and informal interplay between Israel's civil and military elites (e.g. Etzioni-Halevy 1996; Barak and Sheffer 2006). Others, however, seem to have been driven by an almost frenzied determination to explore more obscure nuances of relations between the IDF and Israeli society at large. So intense was their quest – and, for that matter, so spectacular its success – that they left few (if any) stones in this particular mosaic unturned. As subsequent chapters will show, thanks to their labors, we now possess, at the macro-level, detailed studies of the IDF's corporate influence on various areas. One is Israel's economy (including her industrial structure and utilization of land resources); another, the country's stratified pattern of gender relationships; yet a third, and perhaps most significantly of all, many Israelis' collective definitions of their citizenship. At the micro-level, research extends from examinations of the psychological effects of military service on young adults (Lieblich 1989; Sion 1997) to the contribution of enlistment to the socialization of new immigrants (Roumani 1979). As Chapter 6 will show, it also spans topics as diverse as the tensions experienced by religiously orthodox servicemen and women in uniform and the parameters of conscientious objection.

In some part, both the quantity and the range of the output generated in this second wave can be attributed to essentially technical causes. Under that heading comes, for instance, the general expansion that took place during the 1980s and 1990s in Israel's overall academic population and its output. Probably even more relevant was the absorption by the Israeli academic discourse in those decades of new ('critical') sociological methodologies developed in the United States and Europe, whose application to matters military uncovered entire areas of research that had hitherto lain hidden from view.[1] Most salient of all, however, was the influence exerted on academic inquiry in the same period by what Rosenhek *et al.* (2003: 461) refer to as 'a general weakening of the hold of security considerations on public policies and debates … coupled with growing misgivings about,

and questionings of, the military sphere or arena as *the* definer of Israeliness' (Italics in original).

These sentiments became especially influential during the first Lebanon War (1982–1985) and the first and second *intifada*s (1987–1993 and 2000–2006, respectively), times when it in any case became acceptable in some circles to portray the IDF as more often the sinner than the sinned against. A growing number of sociologists then began to put together a new 'meta-narrative' of Israel's development, whose thrust is reflected in the avowedly censorious tone that informs many of the studies published in that period. Several of the most prominent reconstructions of the national story, which are in many ways also the most fruitful, almost deliberately aimed to demonstrate that, on close inspection, the influence of the IDF on Israeli society turns out to have been far less benign than used to be so smugly assumed. Once the traditional teleological version was abandoned, it became possible, if not mandatory, to modify the celebratory and almost pious tone that had hitherto been considered de rigueur in all discussions related to the IDF – and that had, between the lines, characterized Lissak's analyses of relationships between Israelis and their army too.

Avishai Ehrlich, a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, presented an initial version of the new approach as early as 1987, in an article that considered the Arab–Israeli conflict, not as an exogenous factor in Israel's development, but rather as a constitutive of Israeli society and state (Ehrlich 1987: 121–42). As Peri (1996b) shows, similar themes were later developed by a wide spectrum of analysts, ranging from anthropologists to political economists. But undoubtedly, their most persistent and influential exponent was Baruch Kimmerling, a one-time student of Lissak's who very much blazed his own trail in the academic community. Whereas at one stage Kimmerling portrayed Israel's democratic society as a flexible system, capable of adapting to different social structural codes in times of 'war' and 'non-belligerence' (Kimmerling 1985), his later works detected a far more consistent tendency in Israel toward what he called 'cognitive militarism'. This he defined as a '*latent state-of-mind*' (his emphasis), at whose core stands the conviction that 'military considerations, as well as matters that are defined as "national security" issues, almost always receive higher priority than political, economic and ideological problems' (Kimmerling 1993: 200). Thus described, 'cognitive militarism' encouraged Israel's elites, civilian as well as military, to seek primarily violent military resolutions to security problems that might be amenable to alternative treatment.

Partly because of the rambling style of his writing, and partly because some of his examples were patently inappropriate, Kimmerling's thesis sometimes fell flat (Peri 1996a). Painting with a broad brush, he could only generalize about cognitive militarism's alleged impact on the 'social construction of the Arab–Jewish conflict' and on Israel's political, eco-